

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/873,342

Examiner

Chau Nguyen

Applicant(s)

YOSHII ET AL.

Art Unit

2176

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 02/27/2006.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-5, 7, 10, 32-36, 38, 41-46, 48, 51 and 52.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
- (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
- 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

William L. Bashore
WILLIAM BASHORE
PRIMARY EXAMINER

Examiner's Amendment

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Applicant's representative, Leonard Diana, on May 10, 2006.

The application has been amended as follows:

1. (previously presented): A signature processing method for displaying a signature on a display unit, comprising:

an inputting step of inputting a signature on the display unit, the signature being handwritten by a user via a digitizer, the signature being composed of at least one stroke; and

a control step of displaying the inputted stroke of the signature and a background pattern on the display unit, wherein the background pattern is a pattern which makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature as the stroke is being inputted via the digitizer in said inputting step, while yet allowing the user to discern the stroke of the signature as the stroke is being inputted via the digitizer in said inputting step.

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2. **(currently amended)**: A signature processing method according to Claim 1, further comprising a determining step, of determining whether an instruction is given by the user to display the stroke of the signature in a manner such that it is difficult for the others to discern the stroke of the signature **[[in a manner that it is difficult for the others to discern the stroke of the signature]]** and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature,

wherein said control step is executed in response to a determination in said determining step that the instruction is given,

and wherein said control step includes displaying, in a normal fashion, the stroke of the signature being inputted via the digitizer on the display unit when it is determined in said determining step that the instruction is not given.

3. (previously presented): A signature processing method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

a registering step, of registering the signature inputted in said inputting step.

4. (previously presented): A signature processing method according to Claim 1, wherein, in said control step, the stroke of the signature is displayed at the color similar to a color of the background pattern.

5. (previously presented): A signature processing method according to Claim 1, wherein the background pattern displayed in said control step is a hatched pattern that makes it

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difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature.

6. (canceled).

7. (previously presented): A signature processing method according to Claim 1, wherein portions near the beginning point and the end point of the stroke of the signature are displayed in said control step in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature.

8. (canceled).

9. (canceled).

10. (previously presented): A signature processing method according to Claim 1, wherein the stroke of the signature comprises coordinate data which is input via the digitizer.

11-31. (canceled).

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32. (previously presented): A signature processing apparatus for displaying a signature on a display unit, comprising:

inputting means for inputting a signature on the display unit, the signature being handwritten by a user via digitizer, the signature being composed of at least one stroke; and

control means for displaying inputted stroke of the signature and a background pattern on the display unit, wherein the background pattern is a pattern which makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature as the stroke is being inputted via the digitizer by said inputting means, while yet allowing the user to discern the stroke of the signature as the stroke is inputted via the digitizer by said inputting means.

33. (**currently amended**): A signature processing apparatus according to Claim 32, further comprising determining means for determining whether an instruction is given by the user to display the stroke of the signature in a manner such that it is difficult for the others to discern the stroke of the signature **[[in a manner that it is difficult for the others to discern the stroke of the signature]]** and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature,

wherein said control means operates in response to a determination by said determining means that the instruction is given,

and wherein said control means displays, in a normal fashion, the stroke of the signature being inputted via the digitizer on the display unit when it is determined by said determining means that the instruction is not given.

34. (previously presented): A signature processing apparatus according to Claim 32, further comprising:

registering means for registering the signature inputted by said inputting means.

35. (previously presented): A signature processing apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein said control means displays the stroke of the signature at the color similar to a color of the background pattern.

36. (previously presented): A signature processing apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein the background pattern displayed by said control means is a hatched pattern that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature.

37. (canceled).

38. (previously presented): A signature processing apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein said control means displays only a portion of the stroke of the signature in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature.

39. (canceled).

40. (canceled).

41. (previously presented): A signature processing apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein the stroke of the signature comprises coordinate data which is input via the digitizer.

42. (previously presented): A signature processing program for displaying a signature on a display unit, comprising:

an inputting step, of inputting a signature on the display unit, the signature being handwritten by a user via a digitizer, the signature being composed of at least one stroke; and

a control step, of displaying the inputted stroke of the signature and a background pattern on the display unit, wherein the background pattern is a pattern which makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature as the stroke is being inputted via the digitizer in said inputting step, while yet allowing the user to discern the stroke of the signature as the stroke is being inputted via the digitizer in said inputting step.

43. (**currently amended**): A signature processing program according to Claim 42, further comprising a determining step, of determining whether an instruction is given by the user to display the stroke of the signature in a manner such that is difficult for the

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others to discern the stroke of the signature **[[in a manner that it is difficult for the others to discern the stroke of the signature]]** and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature,

wherein said control step is executed in response to a determination in said determining step that the instruction is given,

and wherein said control step includes displaying, in a normal fashion, the stroke of the signature being inputted via the digitizer on the display unit when it is determined in said determining step that the instruction is not given.

44. (previously presented) A signature processing program according to Claim 42, further comprising:

a registering step, of registering the signature inputted in said inputting step.

45. (previously presented): A signature processing program according to Claim 42, wherein, in said control step, the stroke of the signature is displayed at the color similar to a color of the background pattern.

46. (previously presented): A signature processing program according to Claim 42, wherein the background pattern displayed in said control step is a hatched pattern that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature.

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47. (canceled).

48. (previously presented): A signature program according to Claim 42, wherein portions near the beginning point and the end point of the stroke of the signature are displayed in said control step in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature.

49. (canceled).

50. (canceled).

51. (previously presented): A signature processing program according to Claim 42, wherein the stroke of the signature comprises coordinate data which is input via the digitizer.

52. (previously presented): A computer-readable storage medium storing a signature processing program, the program comprising:

an inputting step, of inputting a signature on the display unit, the signature being handwritten by a user via a digitizer, the signature being composed of at least one stroke; and

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a control step, of displaying the inputted stroke of the signature and a background pattern on the display unit, wherein the background pattern is a pattern which makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature as the stroke is being inputted via the digitizer in said inputting step, while yet allowing the user to discern the stroke of the signature as the stroke is being inputted via the digitizer in said inputting step.

William L. Bashore
WILLIAM BASHORE
PRIMARY EXAMINER

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

1. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

In interpreting the claims in light of the specification and applicant's arguments, the Examiner finds the claimed invention is patentably distinct from the prior art of record.

The prior art of record includes Paltenghe, US Patent No. 6,757,826, Hoover, US Patent No. 6,209,102, McConnell et al. (McConnell), US Patent No. 6,148,093, and Powell et al. (Powell), US Patent No. 5,650,943.

Paltenghe discloses an individual's signature graphic may be obtained by capturing the pen strokes utilized by an individual to sign their name and the individual may visually recognize their own signature while having assurances that their signature was not forged (col. 1, lines 38-49, col. 3, lines 6-15, col. 5, lines 52-59, and col. 6, line 62 – col. 7, line 6).

Hoover discloses a method and apparatus for secure entry of access codes in a computer environment comprising a user inputting his access code such as PIN or Password (signature) into the computer environment to access a transaction, the user also has an option of hiding the PIN (signature) during the process of entering or selecting the PIN by clicking on the button "Hide PIN" in the computer environment (Abstract, Fig. 1 and col. 2, line 25 – col. 3, line 10).

McConnell discloses user registers his signature with the writing device on the writing surface (Abstract, Figs. 2-3, 5a and 6, col. 7, lines 53-55 and col. 9, lines 31-39).

Powell discloses that a signature is displayed as a dotted line (broken line) (Fig. 24A and col. 18, line 49 - col. 19, 60).

2. Claim 1 is allowed because the prior of record does not explicitly disclose alone or in combination a control step of displaying the inputted stroke of the signature and a background pattern on the display unit, wherein the background pattern is a pattern which makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature as the stroke is being inputted via the digitizer in said inputting step, while yet allowing the user to discern the stroke of the signature as the stroke is being inputted via the digitizer in said inputting step. Examiner finds the arguments on page 13 of the remarks to be persuasive since neither Paltenghe nor Hoover discloses the background displayed wherein the background pattern is a pattern which makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature.

3. The dependent claims 2-5, 7, and 10 further limit independent claim 1. Claims 32-36, 38, 41-46, 48, 51 and 52 are considered allowable for the same reasons set forth for claims 1-5, 7 and 10.

4. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the Issue Fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the Issue Fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

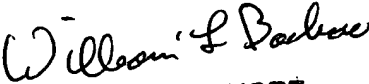
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Chau Nguyen whose telephone number is (571) 272-4092. The Examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the Examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's supervisor, Heather Herndon, can be reached at (571) 272-4136.

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306. On July 15, 2005, the Central Facsimile (FAX) Number will change from 703-872-9306 to 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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